

Mr. Weiss,

Due to circumstances out of my control, I was unable to respond to your request for comments until now. If possible, please pass these comments along to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee for their April 6 meeting.

To the Committee:

While it is true that the large urban areas of the state struggle with congestion on many of their major highways, the rural areas have many more lane miles to improve and maintain compared to the local population numbers of their areas. It is our understanding that the formula was developed in consideration of those factors.

If the formula is changed to increase funding to the urban areas at the expense of the rural areas, the rural highways will not be able to maintain a reasonable level of service to, not only the citizens of the local areas, but also to people from the urban areas passing through to other destinations, freight transport into and through the area, and tourism travel.

The Northeastern area of the state in which the Peanut Belt RPO counties of Bertie, Halifax, Hertford and Northampton are located, is economically deprived, as are most of the truly rural regions of the state. Good roads are a vital element of economic growth, and to deprive those rural areas of the funding necessary to update and maintain their highways will cripple them even further. The Peanut Belt RPO has been and continues to be strongly in support of continuing the current Transportation Funding Distribution Formula ("Equity Formula").

On behalf of the citizens and local governments in the Peanut Belt RPO region, I respectfully ask that the Committee consider the well-being of all regions of the state and preserve the Transportation Funding Distribution Formula in its current form.

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